

Literature and the Environment Section 01

ENGL 30

Spring 2023 3 Unit(s) 01/25/2023 to 05/15/2023 Modified 01/30/2023

Contact Information

A Beautiful World

Class Location: Boccardo Business Center 130

Class Meeting: TR 1:30-2:45pm

Dr. Mostafa Jalal

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Office Hours

TR 12:00-1:00pm, and by appointment

Faculty Office Building 224, and on Zoom

Course Description and Requisites

Explores the ways in which writers and literary texts engage environmental issues and represent the natural world and humanity's place in it, paying close attention to issues of ecology, the landscape, conservation, sustainability, and human intervention/interference. Possible areas of inquiry include nature writing, ecofeminism, ecocriticism, environmental justice, postcolonial environments, and the Anthropocene.

GE Area(s): C2. Humanities

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO):

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze significant works of literature that both represents and responds to humanity's relationship to nature.
2. Understand the varied and diverse historical/cultural contexts in which specific texts were created
3. Recognize the accomplishments and issues related to women and diverse cultures as reflected in the assigned texts.

Departmental Learning Objectives ("E" in syllabus)

English 30 serves four of the five learning objectives of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, by having students demonstrate the ability to do the following:

E 1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of “close reading” or close analysis in both the study of literature and the study of film;

E 3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;

E 4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively; and

E 5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU’s General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students’ core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university’s commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php) (<https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php>).

Course Goals

Expanded Course Description and Goals:

Knowledge is power. And it seems the more we know and learn about our environment, the more complex it becomes. But before we start our conversation about the many factors and complications of our environment, let’s first begin with the environment. What comes to mind when we think of our environment? Is it our natural surrounding—whether our immediate area and region or our larger planet and astronomical space? Is it our intellectual realm? Is it our physical dwelling? Is it both? What about the importance of nature in our philosophical ideals and theories? As we ponder these questions, it also becomes clear that the environment—as complex as it is—is also quite simply beautiful. In this course, let’s explore these ideas and notions together—the intricacies and nuances that make our environment and world *beautiful*. By voyaging through canonical and non-canonical texts by Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Carson, Dickinson, Whitman, Frost and others, we will aim to discover a deeper understanding of our natural environment and what makes it uniquely, quintessentially, and incredibly spectacular.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area C2: Humanities

Area C Arts and Humanities courses help students to respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and to develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. C2 Humanities courses encourage students to analyze and appreciate works of philosophical, historical, literary, aesthetic, and cultural importance.

GE Area C2 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of a C2 course, students should be able to:

1. analyze and understand works of philosophical and humanistic importance, including their temporal and cultural dimensions;
2. explore and articulate their own subjective aesthetic and intellectual responses to such texts;

- analyze and assess ideas of value, meaning, and knowledge, as produced within the humanistic disciplines; and
- research and write effective analyses of works of the human intellect and imagination

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

Course Materials

Required Texts and Resources:

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Nature and Selected Essays*. (ISBN: 978-0142437629).
- Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. (ISBN: 978-0393930900).
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. (ISBN: 978-0618249060). (Suggested text; optional).
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: And Sketches Here and There*. (ISBN: 978-0197500262). (Suggested text; optional).
- PDFs and Links (You may print them if your prefer).
- Access to the Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- Printing and viewing resources for course readings, videos, assignments, and other material that are posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Writing Assignments:

Each of the three essays will be examples of polished, revised versions that have been peer- and instructor- reviewed. Essays should have a clear and concise thesis, a well-organized paragraph structure, and proper formatting.

- Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): Please consider the larger theme of this course. What first comes to mind when you think of the term “environment” and about our place within it? How do you find it fits into the historical context of our era? Which authors or texts highlight these notions for you? In which ideas are you most interested?
- Mini-Ethnography (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): Please visit any natural space of your choice—the beach, a park, hiking trail, garden, mountain, lake, etc. and provide a coherent, meaningful reflection and analysis of the environment and location.
- Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): Consider a full piece of literature—a book of any genre—that captures a unique view of nature, and provide a full, thoughtful review detailing how matters, including the environment, are represented, its significance to our discourse, and how it furthers or challenges your formulated notions of our topic.
- Final Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): For this final assignment, please compose a thoughtful and thoroughly researched essay that details your views and perspectives on a particular notion or idea about nature and our environment. Have we encountered similar views in our class readings? Have we read texts that challenge these views? Find and discuss these concepts in your essay with supporting evidence from scholarly sources.
- Reading Response Questions and Film Reflection.
- In-class peer-review and critique of essays for revision.
- In-class activities and writing assignments.

Grading Information

Class Grades:

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|---|-----|
| 1. Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection (2-3 pages): | 10% |
| 2. Mini-Ethnography (Essay #1, 3-4 pages): | 15% |
| 3. Literature Review Paper (Essay #2, 8-10 pages): | 25% |
| 4. Final Paper (Essay #3, 10-12 pages): | 35% |
| 5. Reading Response Questions and Film Reflection: | 5% |
| 6. In-class peer-review, activities and assignments: | 5% |
| 7. Participation: | 5% |

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| 93-100% = A | 73-76 = C |
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| 90-92 = A- | 70-72 = C- |
| 87-89 = B+ | 67-69 = D+ |
| 83-86 = B | 63-66 = D |
| 80-82 = B- | 60-62 = D- |
| 77-79 = C+ | 0-59% = F |

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Course Calendar and Schedule:

This is a tentative schedule for this semester. Reading and writing assignments can and likely will change to better suit the needs of our class discussions. Please be sure to attend class regularly and visit our course information on Canvas to note any changes to the syllabus.

**In order to preserve course flexibility, only major assignment dates appear in the calendar below. A more detailed assignment calendar may be provided as the semester progresses, and these calendar dates may be adjusted. Additionally, if and when schedule permits, we will try to visit the university's Writing Center and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.*

***In the schedule below, I have detailed a suggested and advanced reading schedule for you. It is very ambitious. I encourage you to read at this accelerated pace and dive deeply into these texts and ideas. Because they are indeed deep, we will focus on a selection of them and read at a much more expanded pace within the classroom, discussing major points along the way. This does not mean we are not intellectually covering all of these works and ideas comprehensively within the scope of this course; you and I can discuss any text in robust detail during office hours and conferences. Furthermore, as you do read ahead, if there is a text you would like us to focus upon in class, please let me know and I will make sure we do just that.*

Week 1:

Welcome to class

Introduction of course & syllabus

Introduce Favorite Work of Literature assignment

Week 2:

Review and present on Favorite Work of Literature

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Entering the conversation and understanding the context of nature and our environment

Film reflection: *Select any film or documentary which focuses upon nature, and write a brief reflection*

Read and discuss: Selections of global perspectives on nature

Week 3:

Introduce Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections of global perspectives on nature

Week 4:

Begin draft work and peer critique of Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Week 5:

Nature and Environment Narrative Reflection due

Introduce Mini-Ethnography Paper

In-class activity

Begin draft work: Mini-Ethnography Paper

Read and discuss: Selections by Ralph Waldo Emerson

Week 6:

Continue draft work and peer critique draft of Mini-Ethnography Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

Week 7:

Continue draft work and peer critique draft of Mini-Ethnography Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Henry David Thoreau

Week 8:

Mini-Ethnography Papers due

Introduce Literature Review Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold

Week 9:

Draft work: Literature Review Papers

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold

Week 10:

Begin conferences

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Emily Dickinson

Week 11:

In-class assignment

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Emily Dickinson

Week 12:

Literature Review Paper due

Introduce Final Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Walt Whitman

Week 13:

Draft work: Final Critical Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Walt Whitman

Week 14:

Draft work: Final Critical Paper

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Robert Frost

Week 15:

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Draft work and peer critique draft of Final Paper

Read and discuss: Selections of global perspectives on nature and current environmentalism

Week 16:

Discuss ideas of nature and environment

Read and discuss: Selections by Mary Oliver

Review Learning Objectives: Now what can we do with what we have learned?

Wrap-up of course

Week 17:

Finals Week

Final Paper due via email

****Classes for the Spring 2023 semester end on Monday, 15 May 2023.***